

July 11, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 02-150
Application by the BellSouth Corporation for Authorization Under Section 271 of
the Communications Act to Provide In-Region, Interlata Services in the States of
Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina

Dear Ms. Dortch:

As President and CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, I strongly encourage the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to grant approval of BellSouth's application to provide long-distance service to consumers in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina. The National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) is the largest Black business association in the world. We have 207 chapters located in 40 states and 8 nations and we have direct access to over 85,000 Black owned businesses and proudly represent the 850,000 Black owned businesses located in the United States. One of the NBCC's primary goals is the removal of barriers to commerce. The lack of access to competitive, long-distance service is such a barrier that continues to disproportionately impact under served rural and urban communities where many small, woman and minority-owned businesses are located.

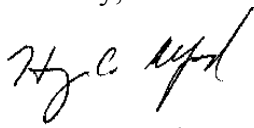
The NBCC believes that, just as consumers benefited from BellSouth's entry in the long-distance market in Georgia and Louisiana, so will consumers in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina. BellSouth has established a track record for innovative calling plans that provide savings to both the low and high volume user. BellSouth's entry will incentivize competitors to provide local, long-distance and data services to consumers within this five-state area. This will especially benefit African Americans, who use long distance service at a much higher rate than the average American.

The Internet, and America's leading position in exploiting Internet-based technologies have driven the extraordinary performance of the U.S. economy over the last five years. Rapid deployment of current and next generation technology to access the Internet is a high priority. Yet African American use of the Internet is only 4 % of America's total usage. BellSouth's entry

will enable it deploy competitive broadband and advanced services. This will enable small businesses – many of which are NBCC members – to engage in E-commerce globally. The NBCC's view is that today a business either has an Internet presence or its doomed for extinction. BellSouth's entry into the long-distance market will likely lead to greater availability and lower prices for broadband and advanced services hereby affording our constituents with the opportunity to help this country to sustain its nascent economic recovery.

To paraphrase a famous quotation: Competition delayed is Competition denied. The NBCC respectfully requests the FCC to quickly approve BellSouth's application. We are confident that the FCC's approval will remove the barrier to access to competitive, long-distance service for consumers in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H.C. Alford", written in a cursive style.

Harry C. Alford
President & CEO
National Black Chamber of Commerce

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